

of coal, heat value, calorific value and the ash content, etc. The average ash content in coal used for power generation is about 40%.

Discontinuation of the market development assistance scheme for handloom weavers in A.P.

*376. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have discontinued the Market Development Assistance Scheme for the handloom weavers of Andhra Pradesh resulting in widespread resentment amongst the weavers of the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the remedial measures Government propose to take to save the interest of the handloom weavers of the State?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (c) The Market Development Assistance Scheme has been discontinued throughout the country w.e.f. 1.4.2000. However keeping in view the need to support the marketing of handloom goods this Scheme has been incorporated in a modified form as Marketing Incentive in the comprehensive developmental Scheme namely, Deendayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana being operated by the Government from 1st April, 2000. Marketing Incentive supports marketing efforts of the handloom agencies through financial assistance.

Marketing Incentive aims at providing financial assistance to handloom weavers to develop marketing infrastructure and links both at micro and macro levels.

The Government has received proposals from the State Government under the MDA Scheme and Marketing Incentive component of Deendayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana in the current year. However, these could not be sanctioned due to the

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lack of certain requisite documentation. The State Government has been requested to furnish the same and upon its receipt the proposals will be considered.

Restructuring of North-Eastern Council

*377. SHRI C. APOK JAMIR: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Ministers of the North-East States have submitted a set of recommendations on restructuring of the North-Eastern Council far back in 1997;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) by when Government is likely to accept these recommendations; and

(d) whether it is also a fact that due to non-acceptance of these recommendations, North-Eastern States are in a bind over the economic development of the region?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I. D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) After considering the recommendations of the State Governments, North-Eastern Council Amendment (Bill), 1998 has been introduced in Rajya Sabha on 8/12/1998.

(c) It is not possible to indicate any time limit by when the Bill would be passed by both the Houses of Parliament.

(d) Delay in passing the Bill by both the Houses of Parliament is not affecting the economic development of the region.